

"They're church people, you know. I thought of the shame and the disgrace. I thought of how I never would be able to face anyone again.

"And suddenly something snapped inside of me, and I plucked the baby from my breast and I threw it with all my might. I saw the little body go crashing through the window. I heard, or thought I heard, a thud—and—I—did—not—care.

"I just lay here on the bed, and stared, and the something inside of me that had snapped left me dull and almost as if I was dead. I could hear people moving in the house, but it seemed as if the sounds came from very far away, as if they had nothing to do with me. I heard a peddler crying in the street, and it was as if he was in another world—

"And then I heard excited cries in the street, and the police came and questioned me, and I told them I had killed the baby and asked them when they would hang me.

"The next day they held the inquest, and I was sure they would hang me. It was the only hope I had left in life—that they would hang me.

"I felt—I felt as if that would make everything all right. It would take me away from the shame and the disgrace and all the horror of life, and it would pay for the life I took.

"I don't know if you understand how I felt. I wanted to be hanged more than anything in the whole wide world. I might

have killed myself, but I did not think I had the courage. And so—I prayed they would hang me.

"And they did not. The foreman of the jury came in, and said that 'in view of all the circumstances'—and they turned me loose.

"I knew what hell was then. I was in it. I still am in it. I always will be in it. There is no escape. No hope of escape.

"I must go through all my life in shame and dishonor and horror. My relatives will be here—perhaps today, and they will look at me with contempt. My parents will come and despise me. They will go back and say, 'How could a child of ours do such a thing?'

"And all my life it will be the same, never able to look anyone in the face, hiding the story of my life, remembering the crash of the glass and the thud from the street as that little body, flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone, hurtled through the window and down to death.

"Always I shall have that memory. I can feel that there is no escape, that there cannot be any escape.

"If I had the courage, perhaps I would kill myself. But the thought of killing myself turns me weak and sick. I could not use a gun. I do not know anything about poisons. How could I kill myself? I might make a mistake and fail.

"And so there will be no escape—"